United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses hope for success of Peace Conference on Middle East to begin in Madrid tomorrow.

- Secretary-General, in Disarmament Week statement, calls on world leaders to reverse arms race and build better, more secure societies; President of General Assembly also makes statement.

- General Assembly adopts resolutions calling for strengthened cooperation with Latin American economic systems and Islamic Conference.

- Political and Security Committee hears call for nuclear-weapon-free status for Korean Peninsula as disarmament debate continues.

- World Health Organization to help four developing countries develop their capacity to test anti-AIDS vaccine.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has expressed hope for the success of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which will begin tomorrow in Madrid.

When asked by correspondents this morning whether he was optimistic about the Conference, he said he was hopeful that something could be achieved and that he thought it was "high time for the world to dedicate its efforts to the solution of the Middle East problem".

The Secretary-General has sent his Special Representative, Eduard Brunner, as an observer to the Peace Conference.

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It would be militarily dangerous and morally deplorable to allow the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States, the Secretary-General stated today. The objective must be to make the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime universal, he said.

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For information media—not an official record

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was addressing the General Assembly's first Committee (Political and Security) at special meeting to mark Disarmament Week.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General further called on the world community to steadfastly encourage further reduction in strategic nuclear forces and urged the serious re-examination of the entire question of nuclear-weapons testing.

He noted that dramatic changes in international relations had led to a comprehensive re-examination of the old doctrines that had hindered progress towards arms reduction. At the same time, he said, the exacerbation of dormant tensions and the emergence of new clashes indicated how delicate was the balance of security.

In his statement, Assembly President Samir S. Shihabi of Saudia Arabia said that the relaxation in international relations had strengthened United Nations efforts to act more effectively. Its increased ability to consolidate international cooperation had been evident in the response to the Gulf crisis.

The observance of Disarmament Week was initiated by the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. The week begins on 24 October, which is the day of the founding of the United Nations. Governments and non-governmental organizations are urged to take advantage of the Week to increase public awareness of the dangers of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race.

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The General Assembly yesterday called for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and two regional organizations -- the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the Organizations of the Islamic Conference. The Assembly took that action by adopting two resolutions without a vote, concerning each organization.

In adopting the resolution on SELA, the Assembly welcomed the agreement signed last month between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, by which they established a means to exchange information on economic and social matters and to coordinate efforts to collect, analyse, publish and disseminate information concerning such matters.

By adopting the resolution on the Islamic Conference, the Assembly recommended that a general meeting between the organizations be held next year. It also urged the United Nations to increase technical and other forms of assistance to the Conference.

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The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Chang Guk, called yesterday for the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from the south of the Peninsula, as the General Assembly's First Committee (Political and Security) continued its debate on disarmament. Once the Peninsula has

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been declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, he said, the United States, the Soviet Union and China should legally guarantee that status.

Mr. Chang Guk said that his country, which faced a nuclear threat from the South, was unwilling to accept unilateral inspections of its nuclear facilities, but it would accept inspections if they were simultaneously conducted in the North and the South of the Peninsula. "We have neither the capability to have a nuclear arms race with other nations", he said, "nor the intention to develop nuclear weapons to destroy our own nation".

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A United Nations Press Officer reported from Geneva today that the World Health Organization (WHO) had announced that it would help four developing countries improve their capacity to test anti-AIDS vaccines. The Agency said that it was important to ensure that developing countries could participate in the testing of the vaccine.

The Director of the WHO's Global AIDS Programme, Michael Merson, said that testing anti-AIDS vaccines in developing countries would accelerate the development of appropriate vaccines where the need was greatest. The WHO had chosen Brazil, Rwanda, Thailand and Uganda as trial sites and would help those countries to finance laboratory equipment and train their scientists. Experimental vaccines were now being tested in small numbers on human volunteers in North America and Europe.

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